

REMARKS

Claims 109, 110, 127, 130, 137, 138, and 144 are amended herein to improve the clarity of the claims. Claims 145-148 are added herein. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 109-148 will be pending.

Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

A Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is enclosed herein for consideration by the Office.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the allowance of the subject matter of claims 138-141. Claim 138 is amended herein to incorporate the features of claims 137 and 109, from which it depends. As such, claims 138-141 should be in proper form for allowance.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

Claim 109

Turner et al. Rejection

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 109 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Turner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,455,316) is respectfully requested.

In pertinent part, amended claim 109 discloses a method of parallel processing multiple reaction mixtures comprising the steps of: providing reaction chambers with starting materials to form reaction mixtures; agitating the reaction mixtures during at least a portion of the experiment; **providing interchangeable manifolds having inlet/outlet ports in fluid communication with the respective reaction chambers, wherein a fluid can be introduced into, withdrawn from or vented through the respective reaction chambers;** and evaluating one or more properties of the reaction mixtures or portions of the reaction mixtures.

Turner et al. and the other references of record fail to disclosure these novel features and therefore cannot anticipate claim 109. Turner et al. disclose an injector adapter plate 1008 sandwiched between an upper plate 1010 and a block 1012 (Figs. 47 and 48). The injector adapter plate 1008 provides conduits for liquid flow between an injector manifold 1006 and each of several wells or vessels within the block 1012. The injector manifold 1006 includes first flow paths 1130 for providing fluid communication between fill ports 1004 and valves 1014. But the injector manifold 1006 **is not interchangeable** with other manifolds as contemplated by claim 109 and supported by Applicants' specification. The injector manifold 1006 is a solitary part usable only by itself for interaction with the fill ports 1004 and valves 1014. No other manifolds are disclosed or supported.

In contrast, Applicants' invention contemplates and requires interchangeable manifolds, as exemplified by (but not limited to) the single general use manifold 56, the flow-through manifold 600, and the static pressure manifold 700 described in the application. Moreover, Applicants' specification states the following about the interchangeable manifolds of Applicants' invention:

Each of the manifold assemblies 56, 600 and 700 can be used interchangeably. That is, a single general use manifold 56, flow-through manifold 600 or a static pressure manifold 700 **could be used in conjunction with another** general use manifold 56, flow-through manifold 600, or a static pressure manifold 700. **The interchangeability of the various manifolds 56, 600 and 700 permits the user to establish a variety of flow paths through the reactor block 12.**

As-filed application, paragraph 96 (emphasis added). The interchangeability of the claimed manifolds unambiguously refers to the ability of the manifolds to be substituted for one another or used in combination with one another to establish a variety of flow paths. In contrast, Turner et al. disclose a single manifold for solitary use, not in conjunction with any other manifolds. Turner et al. provide no teaching or suggestion of the interchangeability of its injector manifold 1006 with other manifolds. Thus, Turner et al. cannot anticipate claim 109.

For at least these reasons, claim 109 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 110-144, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 109, are submitted as patentable for the same reasons as claim 109.

Antonenko et al. Rejection

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 109 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Antonenko et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,866,342) is respectfully requested.

In pertinent part, amended claim 109 discloses a method of parallel processing multiple reaction mixtures comprising the steps of: providing reaction chambers with starting materials to form reaction mixtures; agitating the reaction mixtures during at least a portion of the experiment; **providing interchangeable manifolds having inlet/outlet ports in fluid communication with the respective reaction chambers, wherein a fluid can be introduced into, withdrawn from or vented through the respective reaction chambers**; and evaluating one or more properties of the reaction mixtures or portions of the reaction mixtures.

Antonenko et al. and the other references of record fail to disclose these novel features and therefore cannot anticipate claim 109. Antonenko et al. discloses a plurality of inlet tubes 40 for introducing fluids into the reaction vessels and a plurality of outlet tubes 44 through which fluids exiting the reaction vessels will pass (Antonenko et al., column 4, lines 53-65, see Fig. 5). The present Office action argues that the inlet tubes 40 and outlet tubes 44 teach or suggest providing interchangeable manifolds. (page 6, line 22 to page 7, line 3). Applicants do not understand the Office's basis for such an argument. The inlet tubes 40 and outlet tubes 44 are not manifolds, and do not provide the functions of manifolds. They function merely as conduits, rather than manifolds as contemplated by claim 109 and supported by Applicants' specification. Moreover, Antonenko et al. provide no teaching or suggestion for providing any interchangeability with respect to the inlet tubes 40 and outlet tubes 44. According to

the teaching of Antonenko et al., the tubes are **not interchangeable** with any other tubes, manifolds, or parts of any kind.

In contrast, and as discussed above, Applicants' invention contemplates and requires interchangeable manifolds, as exemplified by (but not limited to) the single general use manifold 56, the flow-through manifold 600, and the static pressure manifold 700 described in the application. Moreover, Applicants' specification states the following about the interchangeable manifolds of Applicants' invention:

Each of the manifold assemblies 56, 600 and 700 can be used interchangeably. That is, a single general use manifold 56, flow-through manifold 600 or a static pressure manifold 700 **could be used in conjunction with another** general use manifold 56, flow-through manifold 600, or a static pressure manifold 700. **The interchangeability of the various manifolds 56, 600 and 700 permits the user to establish a variety of flow paths through the reactor block 12.**

As-filed application, paragraph 96 (emphasis added). The interchangeability of the claimed manifolds unambiguously refers to the ability of the manifolds to be substituted for one another or used in combination with one another to establish a variety of flow paths. In contrast, Antonenko et al. merely disclose inlet tubes 40 and outlet tubes 44, not used in conjunction with any other manifolds, or parts of any kind. Thus, Antonenko et al. cannot anticipate claim 109.

For at least these reasons, claim 109 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 110-144, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 109, are submitted as patentable for the same reasons as claim 109.

New Claims

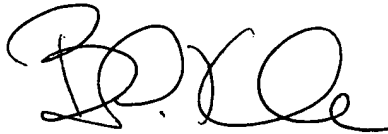
New claims 145-148 are also added herein and submitted as patentable over the art of record.

Conclusion

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any payment required to Deposit Account No. 50-0496.

In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Klein', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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